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Select Committee on Veterans Affairs Public Hearing

S.B. No. 313 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF CERTAIN CLAIMS FOR THE VETERANS' PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION.

SUPPORT- The National Personnel Records Center fire of 1973, also referred to as the 1973 National Archives fire occurred at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in Overland, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis on July 12, 1973, striking a severe blow to the National Archives and Records Administration, the custodian of military service records, lost approximately 16-18 million official military personnel records as a result of the fire.

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) normally responds to requests for Separation Documents (such as DD Form 214) in ten (10) working days or less. However, requests that involve reconstruction efforts due to the 1973 fire or older records which require extensive search efforts may take much longer.

Allowing honorably discharged veterans to qualify for the veterans' property tax exemption by submitting a notarized statement pending verification is a reasonable resolution to a problem often beyond the veteran's ability to resolve.

S.B. No. 314 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MILITARY OR VETERAN STATUS ON STATE-ISSUED FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS.

SUPPORT- All reasonable effort should be made by state agencies to connect veterans with the Department of Veterans Affairs and access to information regarding veteran's benefits. Veterans Benefits offer services including: Health Care, Dental, Disability Compensation, Disability Pension, Burial, Educational Benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Homes Loans, Survivor Benefits and many other benefits.

S.B. No. 347 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A SET-ASIDE PROGRAM FOR VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES.

SUPPORT- Unemployment is over 11% in the veteran community; Connecticut should follow the example of California and the federal government and provide set-aside opportunities for veterans.



California requires each state agency that contracts for goods and services and school districts using state construction funds to try to award at least 3% of their contracts to businesses owned by disabled veterans. Every year, each state agency must report to the governor and the legislature their total participation in the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) program. Any state agency that does not achieve the 3% goal must explain its reasons for failing to do so and submit a plan for future attainment. The agency may also have to explain its results and efforts to a legislative panel.

The Small Business Development Act of 1999 amended the Small Business Act by adding small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans to the categories of small businesses for which federal agencies develop contract goals. The act is designed to serve the veteran entrepreneur by formulating, executing, and promoting policies and programs that assist veterans seeking to start and develop small businesses.

H.B. No. 5351 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS FOR VETERANS IN NURSING HOME FACILITIES.

SUPPORT- The U.S. Veterans Administration is unique in its ability to negotiate costs with pharmaceutical companies thereby providing veterans with prescription drugs at the lowest possible cost.

How the VA Cuts Costs- The General Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report, "VA and DoD Health Care: Factors Contributing to Reduced Pharmacy Costs and Continuing Challenges," on July 22, 2002, that identified factors, including the use of drug formularies, that contribute to cost reduction. The use of formularies depends on the idea that some drugs are "therapeutically interchangeable—that is, essentially equivalent in terms of efficacy, safety, and outcomes." Use of a particular drug, therefore, can be encouraged by placing it in an "open" class in the formulary or mandated by placing it in a "closed" class. In either case, savings can accrue by promoting the use of less-expensive, but effective, drugs and by negotiating lower costs by ensuring bulk purchasing.

The VA also uses various purchasing arrangements to cut costs. The VA, Department of Defense (Dodd), Public Health Service, and Coast Guard can purchase drugs at the Federal Ceiling Price, which is a specified percentage lower than the average manufacturer's price. The VA has conducted competitions among manufacturers to gain the lowest price for generic drugs. Joint procurements between the DoD and the VA also result in savings, particularly for generic drugs, because manufacturers respond to the anticipated volume of sales by cutting their prices.